

ABSTRACT

A laser element driving apparatus is provided to safely drive a laser element. This laser element driving apparatus 1 includes: a laser element LD that varies the light intensity corresponding to the current that flows; a photo-detection element PD that monitors and converts to electric signals the light intensity of the laser element; an emission control switch 11 that controls the current that flows to the laser element LD; a feedback amplifier 12 that controls the emission control switch 11 by feeding back electric signals from the photo-detection element PD; and an emission control switch controlling circuit 16 that turns the emission control switch 11 OFF when determining as abnormal a current flowing continuously to the laser element LD for a predetermined time from the beginning of the laser element light emission and/or that controls the emission control switch 11 such that the current flowing to the laser element LD at the time of beginning of the laser element light emission is gradually increased.